

STATINTL

C.I.A. MYSTERY: PERU'S ANCHOVIES

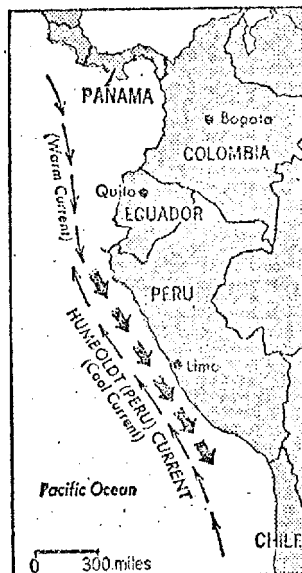
Agency Takes Up a Problem
of Sea Currents and Fish

By TAD SZULC

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 17—The Central Intelligence Agency's thirst for worldwide intelligence has turned to Peruvian anchovies and a "mysterious" warm current in the Pacific that made the fish disappear this year.

A lengthy classified Intelligence Memorandum, prepared last month by the C.I.A.'s Office of Economic Research and ob-



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This year warm currents (heavy arrows) have penetrated the anchovy fishing grounds despite the Humboldt Current.

tained today by The New York Times, reported that the warm current, known as "El Niño de Navedad" ("Christmas Child") had driven the anchovies from their feeding grounds and beyond the reach of Peruvian fishing fleets.

Inasmuch as the processing of the anchovies into fish meal is Peru's foremost manufacturing activity — providing employment for tens of thousands of workers aboard the fishing boats and in coastal factories and supplying 30 per cent of the country's foreign exchange earnings—the unusually early arrival of the current was a blow to the Peruvian economy.

The C. I. A. also discovered that the vagaries of the current are already having an impact on worldwide prices of fish-meal-based livestock feeds and, consequently, on cattle and poultry prices. It may even hurt commodity dealers in the United States and West Germany.

The C.I.A. explained that anchovies thrive in the cool waters of the north-moving Humboldt Current. Every December, warm currents move south to northern Peru, but by March they are pushed away by the Humboldt Current.

But every seven years the warm currents, for unknown reasons, push far south of their normal range, forcing away the anchovies and curtailing catches sharply.

"Peruvians call this phenomenon El Niño de Navedad because it usually appears off their shores during the holiday season," the C.I.A. said.

But this year when an excellent fishing season had been expected, the Humboldt Current was particularly weak, "allowing the Niño to last longer than usual," the memorandum continued.

By June, 1972, the C.I.A. reported, the anchovy catch "had fallen to only about 10 per cent of normal."

Peru had expected an output of two million tons of fish meal this year, but at the end of August the stocks had fallen to 325,000 tons and all exports were banned despite major export commitments.

The C.I.A. study concluded that following the subsequent ban on all fishing, "the fleet and fishmeal plants will lie idle for many months and unemployment will swell."

The memorandum warned that many fish-meal companies might collapse "if not kept afloat by new government loans" and unless the Peruvian Government allowed "the least efficient firms to go under while assuming their debts and offering other jobs to their workers."

Furthermore, the C.I.A. said, Peru's revolutionary military government had relied heavily on fish-meal sales to cover the import requirements for its five-year development plan, which includes oil and copper ventures and manufacturing.

Because Peru held large fish-meal stocks from last year's production, the C.I.A. said, she still may earn \$270-million from these exports in 1972. Last year sales brought \$330-million.

SAGA blows the lid off the South American narcotics pipeline—naming the politicians, and diplomats in Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, Panama, and Bolivia who run the “white gold” death racket—that is controlled by drug traffickers in the Western Hemisphere.

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